1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
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nothing is so startling as to be told that the Tiwi almost completely lacked what we must call "positive" magic. Such familiar mainland practices as bone pointing or "singing" a man to injury or death were completely unknown on the islands, and though references to people dying through supernatural agency were often made, it was very hard to find any positive techniques or known practitioners of such techniques. Briefly the Tiwi may be said to have believed that magical acts were possible but to have lacked any knowledge of how to perform them. If, as anthropology is wont to teach, magic is used in the simpler societies to handle and control the unpredictable or mysterious areas of life, then this absence of magic among the Tiwi needs an explanation. Our hypothesis is that the Tiwi did not use magic in human relations because they had never invented magic for use in other unpredictable areas of life—for example, to control the natural world. And they had never invented magic to control their natural world because their physical environment was on the whole a satisfactory and not a hostile universe.

If we run through the areas of life that many of the simpler peoples use magical means to control, we find that many of them were not problems for the Tiwi. The rainfall and water supply were more than adequate; the food supply was good, needing only people to come and gather it; wild animals (except snakes and crocodiles) were unknown; tropical diseases (except yaws) scarcely existed; cyclones, tornados, and earthquakes were very rare, and thunder and lightning were no more frightening there than in, say, Chicago. Death, of course, is mysterious and unpredictable everywhere, but to handle that they had most elaborate burial and mourning customs that were not magical but collective rituals. Perhaps the most favorable feature in the whole friendly Tiwi universe was the absence of any neighboring tribe. Their cultural isolation removed all fear or suspicion of what the foreigners next door might be up to, and one gets the impression from the literature, though it has not been systematically explored, that the hotbeds of magic making and sorcery were areas of the primitive world, like Melanesia or Central Australia, where people were acutely conscious of their neighbors and always expecting magic and sorcery to be directed by them across the village or tribal boundaries. The Tiwi, having no neighbors, had nobody to be suspicious of except each other, and their suspicions of each other were mostly rational suspicions, of men motivated like themselves and using the same political tricks against each other.

The strongest support for the hypothesis that the Tiwi found their environment a friendly and reassuring universe to live in comes from their wide elaboration and reliance upon the negative form of magic called taboo. As a tribe they were magic free but taboo ridden. Their generic word for anything sacred or forbidden or untouchable was *pukimani*, a word which in its most common form referred to a state of special being in which a person or thing temporarily was. Thus mourners were *pukimani* for the period of their mourning, youths undergoing initiation were *pukimani* during the ceremonies, a woman who had just given birth was *pukimani* for a week or two afterwards. Dead bodies were *pukimani* until buried; graveposts were *pukimani*

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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while one of the "workers" pouring water over him, washed the white paint from his body (Pl. 23E).

This was the signal for another burst of hysterical mourning; the women either beat themselves with sticks or sat in groups, wailing heart-brokenly, while the men, their arms about one another's shoulders, cut one another's heads with knives. The injuries they received, however were superficial, and the cutting and self-flagellations more ceremonial than real.

After the husband danced, the significance of which I was unable to learn, everyone, men, women and children, jumped across the grave. This ritual, originally performed by *Tukimbini* at *Purukupali's pukamuni*, was supposed so to confuse the *mopaditi* of *Nulatini* that, should she leave the grave, she would be unable to find the track to her old camp. The men gave the honey, then the mosquito calls, and the burial ceremony was over.

As the relatives quietly left and returned to camp, the "workers", as in all normal burials, lit a fire for the *mopaditi* to warm herself and to cook her food. They also left water for her to drink. *Pulanimbuwi*, who should have departed with the other mourners, stayed behind and watched these final rituals from the top of a nearby *pukamuni* pole (Pl. 23 D).

3. CUSTOMS ASSOCIATED WITH THE GRAVE

(1) *The Determination of the Cause of Death*

Until the performance of the final rituals, about three months after the death of *Waniamperi*, the grave (Pl. 24C), covered with layers of paper-bark, was left undisturbed, except that a screen of boughs had been erected, as instructed by *Jibungliatuni* of Bathurst Island (see message stick, Fig. 57, G, H), so that the people walking along the motor road leading to our camp could not see it.

For the first few days after the death of *Waniamperi*, distant relatives of the dead man visited the grave and searched for some track or other indications of the cause of death; for the Tiwi, in common with the mainland aborigines, believe that death is the result of the magic of some person or spirit-being, not the result of natural causes.

The morning after the death of *Waniamperi*, someone noticed a wallaby looking at the grave. This, the aborigines assumed, was the man, who, having been responsible for the death,[56] had changed himself into a

[56] This statement requires more explanation than I can give. I do not know personally of any rituals among the Tiwi by which they can magically kill a man, although, no doubt, they exist. Harney and Elkin, 1942, p. 232, refer to a means of attracting the messer-man, *Papinjuwari*, to an enemy.

I was told that

765 the old man had chanted about the *Tawala*,[1]
533 who had planted magic on the beaches to
the north at the beginning of the wet season.
● 754 The sun heated the magic, and up it went
[648] like smoke and the wind blew it all about.
The magic works on the blackfellow with a
feeling like a snake crawling up the legs.
It moves up to his stomach, and when it
reaches his heart he eats no more and dies.
He also sang that he was an old man, his
wind was short and soon he would die. Later
he sang of a fight he had had with another
tribe. Later he sang of people who came
and fed him while he was sick. When
standing in the water he was calling on the
others to make the ceremony. When he
threw up the stones he called *wai tua*, i.e
" finish."

754 During the next four weeks I visited
tribes in various parts of the islands and
heard the same story. I was shown a
sample of the magic. It was a tightly
woven string bag about the size of a billiard
ball and stuffed with kapok. This was said
to have been " sung " before it was buried.

124 Statistics of the mortality of the epidemic
902 presented a problem. The only words for
numbers which I could obtain with certainty

[1] The *tawala* were mainland blacks in the employ of local white men. They were called *tawala* (" lightning ") after the guns carried by their employers.

[p 80-A]

9:Harney & Elkin E-4, 5 (ca. 1940)1943 OI20 Tiwi OI20

An interesting thing in the Kulama is that at that ritual a man must not touch his wives or children, because a deadly sweat called *kilamini* comes from his body and will cause any of his nearest who touch it to die.[7]

Another small ritual is the Miringaleta, a puberty custom for girls; it is connected with the Rainbow snake and is also a marriage ceremony. Last of all comes the Pukamane, a death ritual, the purpose of which is to "lay the shade," *eminkey* of the deceased person and send it back to its clan centre from its wandering around the bush in an endless "walkabout."[8] The "shade" is said to leave the body after a period when the joints begin to crack (the natives call this *Yatarahs*); it then immediately hurries to the various camps, emitting a strange cry, "oom—oom." By this sound—the cry of a night bird—the natives know a person has died.

Culture Heroes. They have culture heroes: Purakapale and with him are the "dream time" heroes, Mudarti (the Kurakun of the subincized people), the wedge-tailed hawk, and numerous others all linked together in the legends of long ago; Kuparani, the frill necked lizard and his sister Ikaikgini, the black cockatoo, are characters in the incest tales.

There are also heroes who produced things and turned into animal form, Irakapa, the alligator, the maker and "boss" of the ceremonial spear—*Tumerika*. Rokama, the mosquito, the headman of the ordinary mangrove spear (*Orati*) which is used for everyday work. In making this he copied the speargrass, *Marakarti*.

The Present Day Spirits. Some spirits vitally affect their present lives. Papinowari, or Lamparapari, the destroyer—expressing in a milder form the *Kadaitja* theory of the central natives. Kala is also an ordinary spirit, in fact a shade of a departed native of prowess in the past, who is on the "walkabout." Barminuar is a quaint elusive spirit—an island Peter Pan—who never grows old, and is about the size of a small boy. He is always up to mischief; many tales are recounted of natives meeting with him and always finding him "too clever." In one place they showed me a tree where such a spirit had entered, not through a hole in the trunk, but had just passed through it, splitting it open; the split is there now.[9] The rain spirit is Pakadringa. The lightning is caused by his wife Bumarali, whose axe splits the trees. His other wife, Tomakaka, is the monsoon and when it begins the natives know it is she by the sighs (the hiss of the wind in those rains).

Magic. Their magic is somewhat the same as in other tribes. The idea differs slightly in that with them the aim is to bring the destroyer, Lamparapari, upon the victim. This is done by burning a piece of blood—a hard piece which has dried up—and letting the wind carry the smell to the victim. The latter becomes affected because Lamparapari is attracted by this smell and sucks out his blood.

[7] The name for ordinary sweat is *kulumpara*. It is interesting to compare the Aaula belief; if a person is sung with magic, a white exudation appears on the skin, with deadly effect.

[8] These people have no idea of reincarnation; in their view, a spirit is eternal but is never reborn.

[9] Trees often burst like this owing to being hollow and full of water or dirt, the pressure of which bursts them open. This could have given rise to the story.

9:Harney & Elkin E-4, 5 (ca. 1940) 1943 OI20 Tiwi OI20

Sickness is cured by beating the ground around the victim to hunt the evil spirit away. Likewise, a song, Upripu, is sung by the wives of the sick man to make him better. The *Kurewa*, a pointed bone, or sometimes a tomahawk is used to stab a person's urine or an article his body has touched (e.g. a bark he has lain upon to sleep) and so cause him to die. Blood thrown into the sea will cause a violent wind and a big tide. The Kulama rite will bring about the same result. No instance has been found of magic being used to entice the spirit from a person's body, yet if a person failed to show sympathy for the dead, the dead person's "shade" would cause that person to die and then run away with his "shade." To mention the name of the newly dead is taboo. If a person accidentally does this he must immediately hit his mouth and spit to cleanse it of the evil.

Names. The names given to the women and men are of three types; the first is the actual name and is given to a person at the Kulama rite; this is an ordinary word such as "honey nest," etc., but it is always in a different language from the ordinary one which is used everyday. The child also receives the name of his father, father's brother or father's sister; this is a traditional name. Then, in the case of a male, come the terms denoting his initiation grade in the Kulama. First stage—*Murakmani*; second stage—*Wadjaneta*; third stage—*Migingartiya*=first song and *Midjintera*=second song; fourth stage—*Mekearterima*=third song; and finally, *Makagala*, which denotes that the man is qualified to conduct a Kulama. Likewise, both sexes have grade names denoting their status in the Pukamane death ritual. Male terms: first stage—*waniati*; second stage—*warunerera*; third stage—*wanereterima*; fourth stage—*wanderara*. With girls and women these names are the same except for the ending denoting the sex.

In the case of women there are terms denoting age or condition. *Kudjine*—child; *alinga*—girl; *miriyaleta*—puberty; *murogarbra*—breasts developed; *piramuruka*—first sign of pregnancy; *paprungala*—pregnant woman; *wanantaka*—woman who has a child dead, and *umparu*—widow. Other terms are *pitukwen*—widower; *mentungini* and *padrubayga*—boy and girl respectively, whose mother is pregnant; *indjula*—a woman whose breasts have fallen; and as on the mainland, a mother is always called by the sex of the child she carries in her arms: *oriowri* if a boy, *kudjine* if a girl.

Language. The language is peculiar. In many instances, owing to the masculine and feminine endings of the words, the women seem to speak a different language to the men. In addition, another language, or set of words, which is very rarely spoken, seems to obtrude itself. Thus one article will have many names. This is brought about by the strong death-taboo on names; as soon as a native dies, his names and his son's names are taboo and others are substituted. In this way every year new words are coined. Only recently at a Kulama two new ones appeared as a consequence of this taboo. *Purintwiya*, new name for tree, and *alepwa*, new name for coconut. Or a Kulama name may be given as, say, *wilinkurawa*, the meaning of which will be given as honey nest; and yet numerous words for honey are nothing

797 of North Australia, they are fond of a joke. They chuckled
522 delightedly. Father McGrath can preach in the native language,
but dear old Father Gsell (every one on the north alludes to him
[198] in these affectionate terms) must deliver his sermons in pidgin.
Sometimes this greatly amuses the congregation, and many
spirited and life-like reproductions are enacted again and again
after the service.

797 WHILE taking a walk round the grounds of the mission
753 station, an urchin of no more than three and a half years of age
764 was pointed out. That very morning this little fellow had
plunged into the shark-infested straits and saved his baby sister
from drowning. She was unconscious when brought ashore, and
the usual methods of resuscitation were followed by Father
McGrath, who had hurried to the scene. Then arose one of the
difficulties the mission staff are constantly encountering. All the
[754] ills that befall the islanders are attributed to magic. No black
ever dies a natural death: always there is some evilly-disposed
person responsible!

When treatment was commenced, the child had been laid on her stomach while the water was pushed out of her body. The blacks had seen an apparently drowned boy revived when laid on his back, and immediately became excited and angry. It was necessary to turn the child over for a while, otherwise the mission fathers would have been held responsible if she had not recovered. And, all the time that treatment was in progress, an old woman (very much in the way) had sung in the baby's ear.

In the opinion of the women who had gathered round, it was the singing that brought the little girl back to life, and her recovery had nothing whatever to do with the father's efforts, although he would have been held responsible if he had not been able to save her! The old men have some glimmerings of common sense, but the old women are terrible old witches and it is quite impossible to convince them.

When anyone is sick, it is the invariable custom to sing a monotonous phrase over and over again in the patient's ear to bring him back to health; and, wherever a pain is felt, it is usual to cut the skin down to the third integument to let the sickness out. On one occasion a man was suffering from acute abdominal pains, and his relations, who wanted to cut him open, came to the mission fathers to seek their approval of this drastic treatment. Here was an awkward predicament! If the sick man was cut open, he was sure to die; and, since nothing would induce him to go to the hospital at Darwin for skilled attention, he might die in any case. In either event the fathers would be held responsible. They stood firm and refused their approval. However, while the relations were hesitating in view of the emphatic assertions of the mission fathers, the man made a surprising recovery. The cure was of course ascribed to the singing, not to the good advice that kept the man on a starvation diet of water only.

755 The islanders firmly believe that they will be poisoned if they go to Darwin for treatment, but they will always trust their own people. One man, who had been employed on a pearling lugger (all the islanders are naturally good seamen), had a leg taken by a crocodile, and was forced to find some new way of making a living. He had learnt a lot too much in the years that he was away, and, on his return to Bathurst Island, he set up in practice as a witch-doctor. A woman on the point of